

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he

referred to Ukraine's Ambassador to the U.S. Oleh Shamshur. H.R. 1053, approved March 23, was assigned Public Law No. 109-205.

Memorandum on the National Flood Insurance Program *March 23, 2006*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of the
Homeland Security*

Subject: National Flood Insurance Program

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including 42 U.S.C. 4016, I have

reviewed and hereby approve your request to issue notes to the Secretary of the Treasury in excess of \$18.5 billion, but not to exceed \$20.775 billion, for the National Flood Insurance Program.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks at a Celebration of Greek Independence Day *March 24, 2006*

Thank you. Welcome. Your Eminence, thank you for your kind words. You're a philosopher; you're a wise person; you're an incredibly compassionate soul; and I'm proud to call you friend. Thank you for being here.

Thank you for inviting me to help celebrate the 185th anniversary of Greek Independence. America is a better country because of Greek Americans. It's something about the passion, the verve for life, the willingness to serve. I am blessed by having Greek Americans in my administration, two of the most important of whom have joined us, Your Eminence: John Negroponte, the Director of the National Intelligence, and the Homeland Security Adviser, Frances Fragos Townsend.

Madame Foreign Minister, we are thrilled to have you here. Thank you for coming. Let me just say this, that it is a wise government who relies upon the judgment and advice of a woman as a Foreign Minister or Secretary of State. *[Laughter]* And I look forward to sharing our visit with my mother and dad, who are close to the

Minister. And I know they're going to be thrilled to know that you're strong and optimistic in serving your great country with class and dignity.

Mr. Ambassador, thank you as well. Appreciate—good to see you, sir. I appreciate Christos Folias, who is the Deputy Minister of Economy for Greece. Welcome, sir. It's good to see you.

I am really pleased that Senator Paul Sarbanes is with us today. He has served with great distinction in the United States Senate. He has decided to move on to other ventures, and the State of Maryland will miss his leadership. Proud you're here, sir.

I want to thank those who wear the Nation's uniform. Your Eminence, as you know, ours is a remarkable country, where people are willing to volunteer to serve our country in times of war. And our Nation is blessed to have men and women who, in the face of danger, say, "I want to help." So thanks for coming. More importantly, thanks for serving. I know you share the

same feeling I share, that it is an honor to serve the United States of America.

I want to thank the other Greek Americans, leaders, and folks who are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for traveling long distances to be here in Washington.

We honor Greek Independence Day because of the values we share. That's why it's a comfortable event. That's why it's an important event, Your Eminence. The ancient Athenians gave birth to democracy. They entrusted their citizens with the power to govern. That's a powerful concept. It wasn't always that way. In some parts of the world, it still isn't that way. But nevertheless, it is a universal concept, started by the Athenians.

We respect the philosophy that grew out of Greece that honored and respected human dignity and human rights and, as you said, Your Eminence, the belief that there is universality to the concept of liberty. Freedom is not confined to Greece, nor is it confined to America. It is universal in its application, and that's one of the great lessons of Greek Independence Day.

America's Founding Fathers were inspired by the democratic ideals, and it helped form our own Union. Those ideals became implanted in long-lasting documents. But as we watch the world today, we must understand that democracy is difficult at times. It's not easy to take hold. It requires work and diligence and optimism and strength and will. But the Greek lesson, not only in Greece but also here in America, is one that with time and persistence, liberty does take hold because of its universality. It's a lesson we honor on Greek Independence Day.

When the founders of modern Greece claimed their freedom in 1821, they had the strong backing of America. The American people supported that independence. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, all members of the ex-Presidents Club—[laughter]—I'm not there yet, Your Eminence—[laughter]—all urged support of the Greek cause.

Young Americans volunteered to serve in the new Greek Army. Many more Americans contributed funds to support the Greek people in their struggle for freedom. America stood side by side with those who struggled for liberty in 1821.

It's reminiscent of what's taking place in the 21st century. Our two nations have continued to work together in freedom's cause. Greece was an ally of the United States in major international conflicts of the 20th century. We're allies in the war on terror. In Afghanistan, Greece is a valuable contributor to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, and we thank your Government for that. Greece provides security at the Kabul International Airport, and we thank your Government for that as well.

Greece has also been generous in the support for the Afghan people, and the Afghan people thank the Greek Government for that as well. Last month in London, for example, Greece pledged funds to support educational programs. The Greek Government decided to support entrepreneurship, with the full knowledge that education and entrepreneurship can lead to a prosperous and thriving economy so that the people can see the benefits of liberty.

Greece is supporting other efforts in the war on terror. Our two nations remain committed to the security and counterterrorism partnership we put in place during the Olympics in Athens in 2004. By the way, people still marvel at how well those Olympics were run. The Government stood up and, in spite of all the criticism that was taking place, put on some great games. It's a model for other countries to follow.

Greece and the United States are working together to keep our people safe. We'll continue to work together to spread the blessings of liberty because we understand that when we spread the blessings of liberty, it lays the foundation for peace. And that's what we want.

At home, Greek Americans strengthen our communities. Greek entrepreneurs contribute to our country's prosperity. The Greek culture enriches our entire country. The Greek Orthodox Church reflects America's religious diversity. It's a source of strength and unity and inspiration for many Greek Americans.

I also understand that Greek Independence Day is the Feast of the Annunciation in the Orthodox faith, that they're celebrated together because they both represent good news. On Greek Independence Day, Greeks and Americans honor the anniversary of the Greek call for independence and celebrate the universal good news of freedom and liberty. We believe that

freedom is God's gift to all people. And we know that by working together, freedom is on the march.

Your Eminence, thank you for inviting me. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:59 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America; Minister of Foreign Affairs Theodora Bakoyianni of Greece; and Greece's Ambassador to the U.S. Alexandros Mallias. The Greek Independence Day proclamation of March 17 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Michael E. Sodrel in Indianapolis, Indiana *March 24, 2006*

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Michael, thanks for having me here. Let me start off by telling you it's great to be back in Indiana, the great city of Indianapolis. I'm here because I strongly believe it's in Indiana's interest to send Mike Sodrel back to the United States Congress.

And I want to thank you all for supporting him. Some of you are from his district; some of you aren't, but all of you are wise enough to know a good candidate when you see one.

I'm traveling without the better half of my family. Laura sends her best to the Sodrels; she sends her best to the Governor; she sends her best to the good people of Indiana. I'm a lucky man to be married to Laura Bush, and Mike Sodrel is a lucky man to be married to Keta Sodrel. I'm glad to be here with the Sodrels and the Sodrel family. I like a man in Congress who has his priorities straight, and Michael

Sodrel prioritizes his family as a central part of his life.

Governor, I'm proud you're here. I knew Mitch was going to be a fine Governor because, first of all, he's a fine man. He's got a wonderful sense of humor. I like a fellow who doesn't take a—run a poll to tell him what to think. I like somebody who stands up and does what he thinks is right. Give the first lady my best and the four daughters.

I want to thank Congressman Steve Buyer for being here. Buyer, it's good to see you. Thanks for your service in the United States Congress. And Congressman Michael Pence—thanks for coming, Mike. I appreciate you being here. It's a good sign when other Members of Congress come out to support one of their brothers. So thanks for supporting Mike.

You know what I know about him. He's an effective person. He can get things done. He's a reasonable guy. That's what you want in the United States Congress.